



## **Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

*— Making a positive difference through education and service —*

August 24, 2006

Dear MPP, ECSE, Head Start, and Title I Preschool Contact:

As part of Missouri's effort to enhance early childhood education, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) conducts an assessment of Missouri students served through Title I preschool, the Missouri Preschool Program (MPP), Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and selected Head Start programs as they exit those programs. The DESE staff as well as staff from other state agencies use the results to inform efforts to create and implement policies that support children's readiness to succeed in school.

To accomplish the goals of the Early Childhood Exit Assessment the Department assesses all kindergarten-eligible students to determine "what they know and can do" as they exit early childhood programs. Teachers and therapists involved in the project use an observation-based instrument to collect data on their students' exit-level knowledge and skills. The observational assessment for all children will occur across the school year and conclude during the last six weeks of their program, but no later than June 1, 2007.

We are now planning for the 2006-07 administration of the Early Childhood Exit Assessment. It will be the sixth year of the assessment for MPP programs, seventh year of the assessment for Title I Preschool programs, third year of the assessment for Early Childhood Special Education programs and the first year for the selected Head Start programs. We are pleased that your district or agency has established one or more of these programs. This means that all of the students in the program(s) in your district/agency who will be kindergarten-eligible in the next school year (2007-08) are part of the assessment population.

It is important for your preschool-level teachers and therapists to know that we are not assessing what they are teaching students, but rather we are investigating the knowledge and skills that their students bring to their formal-education experience as they depart preschool programs. Your teachers should also know that the assessment process is consistent with appropriate instruction. Early childhood teachers who have participated in the project in the past are very enthusiastic about it, and their observations about students' learning prepare them well for working with other students.

Project Construct National Center staff will conduct one-day training sessions for participating teachers on using the assessment instruments. This training represents a powerful professional development opportunity for staff – they become much more proficient at assessing their students' learning as a result of involvement in the project. Principals/Administrators are encouraged to attend the first 30 minutes of the workshop in order to obtain the logistical information first-hand. Training session dates and locations, as well as registration information, is provided on the enclosed sheet. Teachers/therapists who have attended a training workshop in the past need not attend again. Districts may include in their program budgets; travel expenses and substitute costs for teachers and therapists participating from each specific program.

A makeup session will be held at the Conference on the Young Years on March 8, 2007, in the event that teachers are unable to attend any of the training locations and dates.

August 24, 2006  
Page 2

If you have more than one of these programs in your district, the same student(s) may be served by a combination of programs. **Only one assessment needs to be conducted/ submitted for each child, regardless of the number of programs in which the child participates.** Districts must determine carefully which staff member(s) need to be trained on how to use the assessment instrument – as an observational assessment, it is important that the teacher conducting the observation have adequate time across the school year to observe the student in a variety of settings and activities. Observations are conducted in the areas of symbolic development, communication, mathematics/physical knowledge, working with others, learning to learn, physical development, and conventional knowledge. All students with disabilities, even if receiving therapy services only or receiving services through public or private contractual placements, are included in the assessment population. In cases where services are contracted, districts must ensure their eligible students are included through coordination with the contracted placement provider.

Schools do not need to acquire parental permission for ECSE student participation because this is an assessment being given universally to non-disabled students for similar purposes. Also, no notation is required in student IEPs under State Assessment, as that section of the IEP speaks to statewide assessment of student performance, and this assessment is being used for program evaluation and will not result in individual performance scores. No particular accommodations will be required for the assessment. Training activities will incorporate the variety of modalities used by children with disabilities. It is not necessary for Special Education Directors or Process Coordinators to attend this training unless they are going to be conducting observations.

Please contact us at the numbers listed below or Nancy Zguta, Assistant Director of the Project Construct National Center (573-886-4970), if you have questions or need more information about the project.

Sincerely,

**Missouri Preschool Project**  
Jo Anne Ralston  
Director  
Early Childhood  
Division of School Improvement  
573-751-2095  
[Joanne.ralston@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Joanne.ralston@dese.mo.gov)

**Early Childhood Special Education**  
Theresa Villmer  
Assistant Director  
Effective Practices  
Division of Special Education  
573-751-3254  
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**Title I and Head Start**  
Jill Distler  
Administrative Assistant  
Federal Programs  
Division of School Improvement  
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Encl.

**PRESCHOOL EXIT ASSESSMENT TRAINING WORKSHOP**  
**REGISTRATION FORM**  
**Please RSVP by September 28, 2006.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Title (check all that apply): ☐ Teacher ☐ Assistant ☐ Director  
☐ Principal ☐ Speech Path. ☐ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

District (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Building/Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Type (check all that apply): ☐ ECSE ☐ Head Start ☐ MPP ☐ Title I

Building/Program Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

All workshops will meet from **9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.** A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. The hotel meeting rooms will be listed as Preschool Assessment Workshop.

**We will not contact you to confirm your request unless a workshop is closed.** As usual, a make-up session will be scheduled during the pre-conference of the Conference on the Young Years (March 8, 2007).

**Dates, Locations and Directions**

<b>Cape Girardeau</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday, October 5	Plaza Conference Center	3257 William St.	(573) 388-2129	From I-55, take exit #96 (Hwy K/Williams St.). Turn east on Hwy K/Williams St., and continue to conference center, located on the right, behind the Holiday Inn.
<b>Columbia</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday, October 20	Holiday Inn Select Executive Center	2200 I-70 Drive SW	(573) 445-8531	From I-70, take exit #124 (Stadium Blvd.). Go south on Stadium to the first signal. Turn right.
<b>Kansas City</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday, October 12	Hilton KC Airport	8801 NW 112th St.	(816) 891-8900	From I-29, take exit #12 (NW 112th Street). Turn right.
<b>Springfield</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday, October 19	Holiday Inn North	2720 N. Glenstone	(417) 865-8600	From I-44, take exit #80 (Glenstone south). Hotel is on the left.
<b>St. Louis</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday, October 6	Holiday Inn Airport (formerly Four Points Sheraton)	3400 Rider Trail South	(314) 291-6800	From I-70, take exit #231 (Earth City Expressway north). Turn left on Rider Trail South. Continue through signals to hotel entrance on the left.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday, October 27				

RSVP to the Project Construct National Center by **September 28, 2006:**

**Fax:** (573) 886-4976  
**Call:** (800) 335-PCNC  
**Email:** [nzguta@columbia.k12.mo.us](mailto:nzguta@columbia.k12.mo.us)

**Mail:** Project Construct National Center  
 Attn: Nancy Zguta  
 27 South 10th Street, Suite 202, Columbia, MO 65201-5009